

# CORAL GABLES

THE CITY BEAUTIFUL

International Affairs Coordinating Council (IACC)  
Meeting Minutes  
Monday, April 15, 2024

Location: Fink Studio  
2506 Ponce de León Blvd., Coral Gables, Florida

Members:	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Commissioners
<b>Olga Ramudo</b>	P	E	E	E									Mayor Vince Lago
<b>Vicky Rua</b>	P	P	A	E									Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
<b>Sadia M. Raja</b>	P	P	A	P									Comm. Kirk Menendez
<b>Raoul Cantero</b>	P	P	P	E									Comm. Ariel Fernandez
<b>Richard Montes de Oca</b>	P	E	P	P									Comm. Melissa Castro
<b>Alejandra Collarte</b>	E	P	E	P									Peter Iglesias, City Manager/ Amos Rojas, Jr., C.M.
<b>Rafael Gavarrete</b>	E	P	E	P									Council-at-Large Appointment

A = Absent P=Present E= Excused UA= Unexcused Absence X= No Meeting - =Former Member

The International Affairs Coordinating Council (IACC) meeting was called to order at 4:16 p.m. Vice Chair Montes de Oca welcomed everyone to the committee and led today’s meeting as the acting Chair.

Presentation of the Gables Family Literacy Festival (GFLF) by Mr. Samuel Joseph.

- Mr. Samuel Joseph provided a brief history and description of the GFLF and how he would like the Committee to get involved. Before he started, he thanked the Chairperson, all the IACC members, Belkys Perez, and Leticia Perez for allowing him to present. This will be the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the GFLF which is always held in May, just before the summer to remind parents of the importance for kids to read during the summer break.

The event consists of working with the school district to bring families, the community and city resources together at the Youth Center in a book fair format. Mr. Joseph added that they invite book vendors and other organizations that can give families information and support with this type of work. He added that this year for the first time, the library will be open while the festival is happening. The event will take place Saturday, May 18, 2024, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Mr. Joseph said he would like to highlight that the city is an international city through the participation of the large consular corps community in the city. His goal is to create an International Village, a small, tented area to highlight the work that the Consular Corps and the Sister Cities communities engage in. Mr. Joseph invited all the board members to be a part of this year’s event.

Mr. Joseph added that this year they will be honoring the late Commissioner Jeannette Slesnick at the event by renaming Literacy Row, Commissioner Jeannette Slesnick Row.

Vice Chair Montes de Oca added that this is a wonderful initiative and thanked Mr. Joseph for all his efforts with this event. Board members asked Mr. Joseph how they can help, and he said he will work on a draft email with all the information about this festival including the International Village concept and once ready he will send it to Leticia Perez so she can forward it to all the Board members.

## **COUNTRY REPORT**

### **STELLENBOSCH, SOUTH AFRICA**

- Board member Raja reported that she did not have any updates. She is still waiting to find out if the office of the Mayor in Stellenbosch filled out the application to become a Sister City International member. She added that the budget for this was approved back in February 2024.
- Mrs. Leticia Perez reported to all the Board members that she will be attending the All-Americas Summit for Sister City International. The conference is taking place in San Antonio, Texas from May 29th through May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024. She is looking forward to meeting with representatives of each of the seven Coral Gables Sister Cities.

### **SAN ISIDRO, ARGENTINA**

- Board member Collarte expressed that she is having a hard time trying to contact and connect with the new Mayor of San Isidro. She tried connecting via LinkedIn, he accepted her invitation but has not answered her message yet. She will call the Consulate of Argentina and find out if they have a direct contact to the Mayor of San Isidro. She also reported that President Javier Milei visited Miami last Thursday and received an award from a Synagogue in Miami Beach; also, during his stay he met with Elon Musk and took a tour of his Tesla factory.

### **LA ANTIGUA, GUATEMALA**

- Board member Gavarrete reported that the Mayor from La Antigua is coming to Miami soon. He does not have a date yet but as soon as he gets confirmation, he will let the Committee know. He is planning to go to Guatemala on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May and will meet with the Mayor of La Antigua to discuss his future visit to Miami.

### **SANTA TECLA, EL SALVADOR**

- Board member Gavarrete informed all board members that Santa Tecla had elections last month and Santa Tecla is no longer a City with a Mayor, it is now part of the south region of San Salvador. Vice Chair Montes de Oca raised a question regarding what will happen with the agreement with Santa Tecla if the city is no longer an independent municipality

and said that this might be a question for the Sister City International organization. Mrs. Leticia Perez told everyone that she would call SCI to find out.

#### QUITO, ECUADOR

- Board member Montes de Oca reported that the City of Manta, visiting Coral Gables, has expressed their interest in having a Sister City relationship with the City Beautiful. He added that this is something we need to analyze and evaluate since the City of Coral Gables already has a relationship with the City of Quito, which is also in Ecuador. He said that he is preparing a letter to send to the new Mayor of Quito congratulating him on his new post and advising him of the Sister City relationship with the City of Coral Gables. He added that before moving forward with the City of Manta, it is important to know if Quito would like to continue with its Sister Cities relationship. Once the letter is ready, he will send it to Mayor Lago's office for review and signature.

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Respectfully submitted,  
Leticia Perez  
International Business Development Representative  
Economic Development Department  
City of Coral Gables